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CAMPAIGN 1990: MEASURE TO SAVE INITIATIVE.

Editor's note: Here is Part IV of our continuing coverage of key Statewide ballot propositions facing voters this November. This week CALPEEK focuses on Prop. #137 - the INITIATIVE TO SAVE THE INITIATIVE...

...When Calif. started going through its early period of political reform in 1910, when Hiram Johnson was swept into office, voters also approved 3 tools to provide more power for Calif. voters: the recall, referendum and INITIATIVE. For 80 years the initiative process has remained unchanged. And backers of Prop. #137 want it to stay that way...

...Is the initiative process in any danger? With so many initiatives at both the State and local level, there has been some pressure from a small group of opinion molders that perhaps it's time to make some adjustments with the current system...

...But nothing happened until 1988 when Assemblyman Peter Chacon (D-San Diego) drafted a bill to make some technical changes in the initiative process at the local level. It was an obscure bill and few insiders paid much attention to it. It won approval and Gov. Deukmejian signed it into law. One of the technical changes dealt with signature requirements for charter cities, such as L.A. While charter cities number only about 80 of 440 in Calif., they are the bigger cities. Under the Chacon law, in order to qualify a local measure, proponents NOW must collect the signatures of 15% of the registered voters. The old law required signatures of 15% of those who voted in the last election for MAYOR. In a city such as L.A., the difference is nearly 100,000 more signatures, making it more difficult to place a citywide initiative on the ballot...

...The wording of #137 is very simple. It says that if changes are to be made in the initiative process, they must be approved by the voters. The key supporters of #137 are the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Assn. and Paul Gann's Citizens Committee. #137 was written by HJTA president Joel Fox...

...So far as CALPEEK can determine, there is no formal opposition campaign committee, but there is opposition. Ed Foglia, president of the powerful CTA, signed the ballot argument AGAINST #137...

...Bottomline: it is difficult to tell which way the major daily newspapers will editorialize on this proposal, but their support or opposition may be a key because of the length of this particular Nov. 6 ballot and because #137 is fairly obscure compared to other initiatives...

CAMPAIGN 1990: WILSON BACKS TERM LIMITS.

Although he was leaning in the direction of an endorsement of the more restrictive TERM LIMITS proposal, #140 on the Nov. 6 ballot, U.S. Sen. Pete Wilson's endorsement of this controversial measure during his first TV debate with Demo opponent Dianne Feinstein caught many insiders off guard. The team at the YES on #140 campaign had NO idea of Wilson's intent, but were obviously thrilled because Wilson is the first MAJOR candidate of either party (with statewide name ID) to endorse #140...

...But the GOP gubernatorial candidate's backing is not without risk. So why did he do it and what does he hope to gain from this move? Some CALPEEK sources feel Wilson's endorsement of #140 may have an immediate, short term advantage, but wonder if the benefits will outweigh the negatives once the NO on #140 campaign begins hammer-

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ing away on TV. Wilson's team is trying to position the senator as the "candidate of change," hoping to capture some of that anti-incumbent feeling which is present among voters this year, especially on the conservative side of the political spectrum. #140 is seen by insiders as having lots of appeal to this segment of the voting public...

...And make no mistake, it is the political RIGHT which could make or break Wilson's campaign. If the conservatives decide to sit this one out, Wilson will have a tough time. The conservatives never have been all that fond of Wilson, so the senator's backing of #140 is viewed as one way to help him with this voting bloc. Wilson's endorsement of Prop. #136 (the Taxpayers' Right to Vote initiative) also helps win conservative support...

...Question: does this Wilson strategy sell? The endorsement doesn't go over well with many GOP legislators who are opposed to #140. One case in particular is State Sen. Marian Bergeson(R-Newport Beach), who is Wilson's LG running mate. If this group of Republican lawmakers begins to make loud noises, it could hurt. So far, the only voice of criticism has come from State Sen. Bill Cravens(R-Carlsbad), but other GOP lawmakers who oppose #140 may soon start to voice their criticism as well...

...What about the major daily newspapers? They have starting to blast #140, including Wilson's hometown paper, the San Diego Union. About 10 days ago the Union announced its opposition to both #140 and the more lenient Prop. #131. This past week after Wilson's endorsement of #140, the Union criticized Wilson. So did the Sacramento BEE. The basic theme in both editorials was that Wilson was basing his endorsement decision on polling data rather than on sound public policy grounds. But since many conservatives think the news media is controlled by liberals, an editorial spanking of Wilson isn't likely to have much impact. And remember, Wilson endorsed #140 to help solidify his conservative base of support...

...Bottomline: Prop. 140 is a popular, anti-incumbent proposal, but it may be too soon to tell how voters will react once the NO on #140 TV spots begin to air. However, it is unlikely that many pro-Wilson voters

who dislike #140 will switch to DiFi simply because of Wilson's endorsement. Remember, #140 is hot, but it's NOT a button issue like the death penalty, Prop. 13 or even Rose Bird. Stay tuned...

CALIF. INSIDERS WERE WATCHING DAVID DUKE.

Editor's note: Even though Louisiana is nearly 2,000 miles east of Calif., don't think for a minute that a number of political insiders weren't keeping a close watch on last week's election results. CALPEEK spoke with Los Angeles political consultant Val Marmillion, a Louisiana native who ran the successful campaign of then Congressman John Breaux(D-Louisiana) for the U.S. Senate in 1986. Here's our brief report...

...Former Ku Klux Klan leader and now State Rep. David Duke(R) may have lost his bid to unseat incumbent U.S. Sen. J. Bennett Johnston(D) last week, but Marmillion says Duke is far from dead in Louisiana politics. Duke won 44% of the vote against Johnston and his showing sent shockwaves around the U.S. Some insiders think that had the other GOP senate candidate not dropped out, between the two, they might have forced Bennett into a November runoff...

...Why did Duke do so well? Marmillion says Duke had a strident, but very clear message and that because of this, voters were willing to overlook what Marmillion calls "Duke's resume." Duke's negatives were in the 50% range...

...In order to get 44% against an incumbent such as Johnston, Duke built upon a solid base of support. Marmillion thinks the base is around 30% statewide, which is higher than others place it. And Marmillion says Duke's support wasn't coming from just the Billy Bob Bigots, but from a cross-section of White male conservatives of both political parties who are disenchanted with the unresponsiveness of government...

...What about Duke's future in politics? Louisiana is an OPEN PRIMARY state, meaning Duke's chances of success in a crowded primary are pretty good. But in a one-on-one, say with Demo Gov. Buddy Romer, he'd have a tough time getting a majority. But there are other offices, such as a run for the congress, where he might have a fair shot at winning. Bottomline: insiders should keep careful tabs on Duke from now on...

WHO WON THE FIRST DEBATE: PETE OR DIFI???

While most political insiders say the first TV debate between gubernatorial candidates Dianne Feinstein(D) and Pete Wilson(R) was a draw, there were some insiders who think DiFi may have come out slightly on top. As for the public, KNBC-TV in L.A. conducted a poll after the debate of 600 registered voters and found that 26% thought Feinstein had won, compared to 24% who said Wilson was the winner. Another 17% rated the debate a draw and 33% had no opinion. The margin of error was 5 pts. But in San Diego, Wilson's hometown, a KSDO Radio audience on the Roger Hedgecock show felt DiFi was the clear winner, 56% to 43%. Unlike the KNBC-TV poll, KSDO's was not what you'd call scientific, but it might be a reflection of how Wilson came across on TV...

CAMPAIGN 1990: SAN JOSE CITY POLITICS.

Editor's note: Calif.'s 3rd largest city has a municipal election this Nov. 6 and there are some hot items facing voters. Here's a brief CALPEEK update...

...Voters in Santa Clara County's largest city will be picking a new mayor and deciding whether or not to place TERM LIMITS on the San Jose City Council. The mayor's race first...

...In this runoff between former school supt. Frank Fiscalini and San Jose Council member Susan Hammer, most CALPEEK insiders believe the contest is MUCH CLOSER than the polling shows. Some private polling made public by Hammer showed her with a 7 point lead, 32% to 25%. There are some who think that Hammer's effort may be peaking a little too soon. In the last few weeks Fiscalini has picked up some key backing, including that of U.S. Rep. Norm Mineta(D-San Jose), a former mayor. In addition, Councilwoman Shirely Lewis finally jumped off the fence to endorse Fiscalini. Of the two endorsements, the Mineta deal was perhaps the more important because sources say it was his people who got the Demo Party NOT to endorse in this race. Fiscalini is decline to state, while Hammer is a longtime Demo Party activist. Both candidates are on TV, with Fiscalini trying to position himself as "the outsider." Outgoing Mayor Tom McEnery is still neutral...

...As for term limits, there are TWO competing measures facing voters: one measure by activist Murphy Sabatino places a 2 term limit, while the more lenient proposal backed by Mayor McEnery and the council has a 3 term limit (plus an ethics and remapping package attached). The polling shows the 2 term limit ahead. And by the way, the 2 term deal is RETROACTIVE, meaning Councilman Joe Head is the only member of the council who can run again. This probably explains why Councilwoman Lewis is now taking a look at perhaps running against popular Santa Clara Co. Sup. Ron Gonzales in 1992. Stay tuned...

FORECAST CALLS FOR FEW OCTOBER SURPRISES.

Editor's note: The term "OCTOBER SURPRISE" refers to an ambush campaign by the opposition. As of now, CALPEEK insiders see very few October Surprises in the works, but here's a quick rundown. This list does NOT include the TARGETED races CALPEEK has already reviewed...

...CALPEEK sources believe there are two CONGRESSIONAL races where a surprise could take place and CALPEEK has written about them before: 23rd C.D. where GOP challenger Jim Solomon of Beverly Hills will be going on cable TV very soon with some hard hitting attack spots aimed at long term incumbent Anthony Beilenson(D); and the 37th C.D. where Demo challenger Ralph Waite is giving incumbent GOP U.S. Rep. Al McCandless of Riverside all he can handle. Word from D.C. is that the RCCC is worried about McCandless. As for Beilenson, some data by Charlton Research for Solomon shows Beilenson's reelect numbers at a very low 27%. And in a series of push questions, Solomon beats Beilenson...

...CALPEEK sources haven't spotted an surprises in Calif. State Senate contests, but there is at least one potential OCTOBER SURPRISE in the State Assembly: the 38th A.D. With Marian La Follette's retirement, the new GOP nominee is businesswoman Paula Boland. She is the favorite, but could have problems with Demo Irene Allert. Two key issues: abortion and development. Allert is PRO-CHOICE (Boland is PRO-LIFE) and Allert is dead set against the massive Porter Ranch development. Boland is trying to duck Porter Ranch because it's not a very popular issue with San Fernando Valley voters. Stay tuned...

CAMPAIGN 1990: FALL MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS.

Editor's note: Here is a brief update on key local ballot measures that will face voters Nov. 6th...

• LAND OF THE GIANTS - The measure to hike the utility tax in Santa Clara Co., plus 5 cities in the area, with the revenue earmarked for the construction of a new baseball stadium for the S.F. Giants, may be in some trouble. Polls show Measure G down by 8-10 points (but ahead when push questions are asked) and NOT yet having the kind of warchest necessary to push this measure across. One key problem is outgoing San Jose Mayor Tom McEnery. Backers of Measure G should have checked with the mayor first before deciding to use the utility tax as a method to finance this project. McEnery thinks it's wrong to use the utility tax in this way. And while he has NOT come out against G, McEnery says that aside from voting yes on G, he won't lift a finger to help. For residents of the area, Measure G will probably cost no more than a large pizza with everything on it (\$15), because the first \$50 of the utility tax is EXEMPT. But for businesses, watch out. As one CALPEEK source noted, "This isn't an election about a baseball stadium; it's an election over a tax hike." Bottomline: Measure G is not in great shape...

• DIAL M FOR MURDER - In the City of Los Angeles, you actually dial 911 for police and other emergencies and if you're LUCKY, someone will respond quickly. That is the trouble. In 1989 there were some 4.6 million calls to 911, but 532,000 went UNANSWERED. The problem: the Police Communications Center in downtown is not large enough to house the necessary equipment to handle the increased number of calls. So voters are being asked to support Measure J on Nov. 6. #J calls for \$235 million in bonds for new equipment and a new HQ with space for increased load. Marathon Communications is managing the YES campaign...

CALPEEK's READERSHIP POLL - RETURN IT ASAP.

To CALPEEK subscribers: please fill out & return your Fall Readership Survey ASAP. We plan to run the results in the Oct. 29th issue of CALPEEK...

BAPAC TO CONDUCT PROP. 134 DEBATE OCT. 25.

The pros and cons of Prop. 134, the Alcohol Surtax measure on the Nov. 6 ballot, will be debated by representatives of each side when the Bay Area Public Affairs Council holds its next meeting, Oct. 25 at the St. Francis Hotel, S.F. Reception 11:30 a.m., lunch 12 noon. For info & RSVPs, contact Denise Bartoni at The Clorox Co., (415) 271-7228...

BIG GREEN CONTINUES TO DO WELL IN CALIF.

Despite a gut feeling by political insiders that the multi-topic environmental measure known as Big Green has too many flaws to win voter approval on Nov. 6, polling data in the Central Valley, Orange and San Diego counties shows Prop. 128 still being favored by voters. In the Central Valley, #128 has a 45% YES to 41% NO lead. In Orange County, #128 is leading 58% YES to 27% NO, while in San Diego County, YES on #128 is leading by a margin of 48% YES to 28% NO. Keep in mind, these areas are considered moderate to conservative in terms of voting patterns. Stay tuned...

COST TO GET A MEASURE ON BALLOT SKYROCKETS.

The CA Commission on Campaign Financing is out with a preliminary report which shows the MEDIAN cost of qualifying an initiative in Calif. has jumped from about \$45,000 in 1976 (when there were 3 initiatives on the ballot) to more than \$975,00 in 1990, with 13 initiatives on the ballot. (There are 5 referendums and 7 bond measures too)...

...The SINGLE highest cost to qualify an initiative this year is \$1,375,908 for Prop. 135, which is the counter measure to Big Green, Prop. 128. Cost-per-signature on #135 was \$1.80. Big Green's C-P-S was \$1.04. The least expensive qualification cost was Prop. 132, which is Assemblywoman Doris Allen's measure to ban the use of gillnets by fishermen. #132's C-P-S was \$.62 (total cost \$624,686). For more info about the study, call (213)470-6590...

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